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Media Statement

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Colville Tribe Comments on Recent Lake Roosevelt Developments

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) are providing comment on Teck Cominco's recent refusal to address contamination in and around Lake Roosevelt with the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Colville Tribes are disappointed, but not surprised by Teck Cominco's refusal to comply with EPA's Unilateral Administrative Order to adequately assess and clean up contamination in the region. It has been clear from the start of EPA's efforts to negotiate with Teck Cominco that Teck Cominco would not agree to a technically valid scope of work designed to fully assess the harm, or threat of harm, to human health and the environment.

The CCT is disappointed in Teck Cominco's refusal to comply with EPA's unilateral order to adequately assess and clean up contamination in the region.

The CCT supports EPA's leadership in pursuing a legally enforceable agreement and technically valid scope of work to address contamination concerns.

Although Teck Cominco has criticized the U.S. government's use of the Superfund process, in fact it is this process that has begun to make the company accountable for its extensive pollution of the upper Columbia River.

The Boundary Waters Treaty, an international agreement between the U.S. and Canada, has been violated for more than 100 years, resulting in pollution to U.S., tribal and state resources. The U.S. government has an obligation to hold Cominco responsible, and CERCLA is the appropriate path given the complexity of the site.

We expect that the EPA, the Department of Justice and the U.S. government will be aggressive with Teck Cominco. This company must be held accountable for its pollution.

Now more than ever it is clear that the federal government needs to lead this effort. It is important that the U.S. government have oversight in order to have a legitimate and credible process.

The U.S. government must not let Teck Cominco get away with more than a century of contamination. The company has made billions of dollars in part by using the Columbia River as a sewer and discharging their pollution into the United States.

U.S. taxpayers should not bear the burden of Teck Cominco's poor corporate and environmental practices.

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